

REMARKS

This Response is filed responsive to the Office Action dated 29 January 2010. In the Office Action, Claims 1-4, 10-39, 47-81, and 87-96 were rejected and Claims 5-9, 40-46, and 82-86 were objected to for one or more reasons. Additionally, the Office Action objected to the drawings for failing to show every feature of the claimed invention. In response to the Office Action, Applicants have elected to cancel Claims 2-5, 10, 39, 40, 49-52, 57, 81, 82, 87, and 94. Moreover, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 14-16, 22-25, 27, 36, 38, 41, 42, 48, 53, 54, 58, 61-63, 68-72, 74, 80, 83, 84, 90, and 91. It is noteworthy that Claims 2-5 were incorporated into Claim 1 by amendment; Claims 39 and 40 were incorporated into Claim 38 by amendment; Claims 49-52 were incorporated into Claim 48; Claims 81 and 82 were incorporated into Claim 80; and Claim 94 was incorporated into Claim 90. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments presented herein overcome the rejections and the objections and place the application in condition for allowance. The specifics of the amendments and the bases for the Applicants submission are provided below.

With respect to the drawings, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 10, 57, and 87 have been canceled by way of this Response. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the drawings, as filed, show every feature of the claimed invention. While Applicants have elected to cancel these claims rather than amend the drawings or argue the conclusions asserted in the Office Action, Applicants expressly do not acquiesce to the assertions of the Office Action relative to the drawings. Applicants reserve the right to pursue such claims at a later time and/or in a related application.

The Office Action further rejected Claims 10, 49-79, 87, and 94 under 35 U.S.C. §112. With respect to Claims 10, 57, and 87, these claims have been canceled as described above. Claims 49-79 were rejected due to an informality in Claim 49, from which Claims 50-79 depend. Claim 49 has been canceled (and incorporated in to Claim 48), correcting this informality and overcoming this rejection. Finally, Claim 94 has been canceled and incorporated into Claim 90 in a manner that renders its subject more clear. The cancellation of Claim 94 overcomes the rejection thereof.

Still further, the Office Action rejected many of the claims based on various references under 35 U.S.C. §103. While many claims were rejected, Claims 5, 40, 52,

and 82 were indicated to impart patentability to the claimed invention. These claims have in common the recitation of a "jumper fluid conduit, said jumper conduit providing a path for fluid communication between said first riser conduit and said second riser conduit." Each of Claims 1, 38, 48, and 80 have been amended to incorporate the elements of Claims, 5, 40, 52, and 82, respectively, together with the intervening dependent claims as appropriate. Accordingly, based on the indication of allowable subject matter in the Office Action and the amendments presented herein, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 6-9, 11-38, 41-48, 53-56, 58-80, 83-86, 88, and 89 are allowable. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of these claims be withdrawn.

The remaining independent claim to be discussed is Claim 90. Claim 90 has been amended to incorporate the method steps of Claim 94 and the jumper fluid conduit elements that were deemed to be allowable in the Office Action. Due at least in part to such amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 90, and its dependent claims 91-93, 95, and 96, are allowable over the cited references. Accordingly, Applicants request withdrawal of the rejections of Claims 90-93, 95, and 96.

While Applicants have not here argued specific points of each dependent claim, Applicants reserve the right to do so in future responses in this or related applications. Moreover, to the extent not specifically addressed above, Applicants do not acquiesce in the Office's characterizations of the art. For brevity and to advance prosecution, however, Applicants may have not addressed all characterizations of the art and reserve the right to do so in further prosecution of this or a subsequent application. The absence of an explicit response by Applicants to any of the positions or assertions of the Office Action does not constitute a concession. Applicants' comments and arguments herein does not constitute a concession that there are not other arguments for patentability of the claims. All of the dependent claims are patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to the claims on which they depend.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a diligent effort to respond to the outstanding Office Action. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned via telephone at 1.713.431.4657 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Applicants respectfully petition for any necessary extensions of time. If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 05-1328 for any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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